

Idealized Design Case Study

Redesign of U.S. Pharmaceuticals Sales Training Program

“We utilized Idealized Design on two separate occasions in 2007, with a huge impact to our business. Jason Magidson and his team were instrumental in helping us with a major restructuring and in how we will deliver New and Advanced Representative Training. The process we used with Jason’s team was internally and externally customer focused and will have a major impact to GlaxoSmithKline for years to come.”

Tricia Schwab, VP, Sales Training, US Pharmaceuticals

Newly appointed in the role, Tricia Schwab wanted to engage her team and customers in coming up with a vision of the ideal sales training program. Tricia decided to first engage her customers in designing their ideal programs for new and advanced sales representatives. She invited several groups of sales reps, sales managers, regional directors, and VPs whose experience ranged from six months out of training to 25 years on the job. Then, she engaged her team and had them design their ideal sales training program. Finally, she had her management team design the ideal organization to support the new vision.

Here are some of the ideas Tricia’s customers and team came up with and are now implementing for new rep training:

- Have a period, perhaps a week, where the new sales rep candidate rides along/shadows the experience rep to learn what the job is like, sees if the job is right for them, and learns from observing. This give them hands-on/experiential learning that provides context for the other forms of learning.
- Assign each new sales reps an experienced sales mentor for the first year so they can learn via coaching/apprenticeship.
- Include a lot of engaging, interactive, and conversational selling exercises in the classroom portion of the training.
- Move a lot of what was formerly classroom lecture content into online self-study modules so there is more time in groups for interpersonal interaction.
- When new rep goes out into the field, an experienced rep would accompany them for one or two weeks, observe them, and coach them.
- After the initial training period, create an ongoing learning plan that is individualized to the dimensions each sales rep needs to develop further.

Here are some of the ideas Tricia’s customers and team came up with and are now implementing for advanced rep training:

- Use some of the time experienced reps are together to have discussion forums on topics of interest, for example, how they have responded to concerns or objections.
- Provide a range of elective courses that are offered based on input from the field regarding areas of interest.
- Offer a program that keeps seasoned reps challenged, at top of their game. To simultaneously reinforce new reps’ learning, have the new reps train the seasoned reps that latest on product.